



Sirkeer Malkoha: First Altitude Sighting

Published On: 02-01-2026

In the News: In December 2025, the **Sirkeer Malkoha** (*Taccocua leschenaultii*), traditionally a bird of the plains and scrub forests below 1,000m, was recorded for the first time in the higher reaches of the **Uttarkashi district** (Barkot area).

Ethological & Biological Profile

- **Distinctive Features:** Identifiable by its **curved red beak with a yellow tip** and a long, white-tipped graduated tail. Its feet are **zygodactyle** (two toes forward, two backward), allowing it to run on the ground like a mongoose.
- **Breeding Behavior:** Unlike common cuckoos, the Sirkeer Malkoha is **non-parasitic**; it builds its own saucer-shaped nest and raises its own chicks.
- **Conservation Status:** Categorized as '**Least Concern**' on the IUCN Red List.

Ecological Significance for UPSC

- **Climate Indicator:** Ornithologists suggest this upward migration to higher altitudes in Uttarakhand is a response to **warming temperatures** and changing vegetation patterns in the plains.
- **Indicator Species:** Their presence in the Himalayan foothills (traditionally too cold for them) serves as a biological indicator of the shifting boundaries of the **sub-tropical ecosystem**.